

## Once again, the rotten oas

Yesterday the German cable service DPA revealed that the ICHR of the OAS approved a report pointing out that Cuba “continued to transgress” on fundamental rights by keeping “restrictions” on the population’s political and civil rights, while at the same time continuing to be the “only” country in the region where there is absolutely no freedom of expression.

Is there really an ICHR within that rotten institution? Yes, there is, I answer myself. And just what is its mission? To judge the human rights situation in the OAS member countries. Is the U.S. a member of that institution? Yes, it is one of the most honorable members. Has it ever condemned the government of the United States? No, not ever. Not even the crimes of genocide that Bush committed, exacting the lives of millions of people? No! Never! How could it commit that injustice? Not even the tortures at the Guantánamo Base? As far as we know, not one single word.

On the Internet we obtained a copy of the agreement against Cuba. It’s pure rubbish. It is dedicated to counterrevolutionary gossiping. It is long, in the style of those State Department documents, the political paradigm and head of the OAS. How right Roa was when he called it the Yankee Ministry of Colonies!

We could ask that shameless institution: if we were expelled from the OAS for proclaiming our convictions and we are not members of that institution, what right do they have to pass judgment on us? Would the OAS do likewise with the Peoples’ Republic of China, Vietnam or other countries who, like Cuba, have proclaimed their allegiance to Marxist-Leninist principles?

The OAS should know that for a while now we are not part of that church, nor do we share in its teachings. We start from different positions. If we speak of freedom of expression, we must remind it that in our country we do not recognize private ownership of the media. It was always the owners of these media who decided what was to be written and who would be doing the writing, what would be broadcast or not, what would be shown and what would not. Illiterate and semi-literate people cannot do it, and for hundreds of years, while colonialism reigned and the capitalist system was developing since the invention of the printing press, four-fifths of the population could neither read nor write and there was no free and public education system.

The modern media have changed all that. Today, through huge investments alone one can have centers which broadcast the news throughout the planet and only those who direct them decide what is broadcast and how it is broadcast, what is printed and how it is printed.

The efforts made by the Pentagon to monopolize information and the Internet networks are obvious. Our own country is blocked from access to those sources. It would be better that the ICHR accounts to the world the resources that its bureaucracy is spending on stupidities, instead of analyzing these realities and informing Latin American countries about the very serious dangers threatening the freedom of expression of all the peoples of the world.

To question Cuba’s role in this area, it would have to start with the outright recognition that this has been the nation which has done the most for education, science and culture among all the peoples of the planet, and that its example is followed today by other revolutionary and progressive governments. If they have any doubt whatsoever, let them ask the United Nations.

In this hemisphere, the poor never had freedom of expression because they never received quality education and knowledge was reserved solely for the privileged and bourgeois elite. Don’t blame

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Venezuela now, which has done so much for education since the Bolivarian revolution, or the Republic of Haiti, crushed by poverty, diseases and natural catastrophes, as if any of these were ideal conditions for the freedom of expression proclaimed by the OAS. Do what Cuba is doing: first help to massively train quality healthcare personnel and send revolutionary doctors to the most remote corners of the country so that they may contribute to the saving of lives, and transmit to them educational programs and experiences; insist that the financial institutions of the developed and rich world send resources to build schools, train teachers, produce medicines, develop their agriculture and industries, and then talk about the rights of Man.

**Fidel Castro Ruz**

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